

868

The Diamond Sutra, the world's
first printed book (DUNHUANG,
Western China)

868

First printed book in
the world was made in
China.

868 AD

The World's oldest printed book was made in China, from as far back as 868 AD.

They cut the characters for each page in a block of wood. They inked the surface, pressed paper against it, and took away a printed page. One copy after another could be made.

China made the First Printed Book
The "Diamond Sutra" inaugurates a
communication revolution.

China under the TANG dynasty produced the
world's first printed book, the "Diamond
Sutra". It was made from wood blocks
and contained both script and illustrations.
Movable type, engraved on clay blocks,
appeared in China in the 11th century.
The spread of books that followed had

little compact on the mass of the population,
who remained largely illiterate, until
the late 20th century! But printing greatly
facilitated the consolidation of central authority
by the mandarin bureaucracy, and, especially
under the SUNG Dynasty (which succeeded)
gave impetus to commercial expansion by the
circulation of paper money (introduced in
China c. 650) and credit notes.

In the same era, China invented
gunpowder and the miner's compass.
For centuries the Chinese used gunpowder
only for fireworks and the compass not at all.

Danegeld

Land tax first levied in
England to buy off raiding
Danes

Collected by English ruler
until 12th century.